

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 695

By Cepicky

A RESOLUTION recognizing the historical significance of the
Water Valley community.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should recognize those historic communities that have helped to build the cultural richness for which Tennessee is known; and

WHEREAS, the historic Water Valley community is most assuredly deserving of special recognition for its myriad contributions to Maury County and this State; and

WHEREAS, located in Maury County along the banks of Leipers Creek, the Water Valley community was once a bustling stop for the Middle Tennessee Railroad; and

WHEREAS, originally known as Spencer's Mill, after repeated flooding, the community fittingly changed its name to Water Valley in 1874 to coincide with the establishment of a post office; and

WHEREAS, mail was picked up and dropped off at a location inside the Rountree Brothers Store on the east bank of Leipers Creek; founded by George Harlan and J.W. Oakley prior to 1874, the business operated under various ownership until its closure in 1962; and

WHEREAS, while the community lost its post office on December 31, 1902, a number of businesses continued to flourish, including the McGowan Store, which is remembered for its sale of handmade brooms, wild animal pelts, haircuts, and hack service to Columbia; and

WHEREAS, after being purchased by Frank Dodson, the McGowan Store was moved by four mules harnessed to a triple block and tackle to turn the large building around so that it faced Water Valley Road; large stock scales, a peddling wagon, and a gristmill were operated through the McGowan Store during Frank Dodson's ownership; and

WHEREAS, across the old iron bridge on the west side of Leipers Creek, R.P. Pigg erected a store with a round roof in 1896; a number of other establishments followed in the early twentieth century, including Cleve Alderson's store, which was later purchased by C.E. Dodson and enlarged to incorporate a cold storage building and other additions to serve the area's many apple growers; C.E. Dodson continued to operate the business until his passing in 1977; and

WHEREAS, in December 1881, Thomas S. Pigg donated an acre of land along the creek for the construction of a nondenominational church; the building had two stories, with the second floor being used as a school and for public meetings while the first floor was used by religious groups; and

WHEREAS, in 1911, with assistance from Maury County, a four-room building was constructed at a location approximately 150 feet southwest of the church; the new facility housed students from grades one through eight; and

WHEREAS, constructed of brick and concrete block and sited on the west side of Leipers Creek Road, Water Valley School was built by the county in 1949; the school's two teachers taught children in grades one through six; and

WHEREAS, after Water Valley School was closed in 1959, the community's students would continue their education in Santa Fe schools; and

WHEREAS, extensive phosphate mining began in the Water Valley area in the early 1900s, and by 1912, the Middle Tennessee Railroad began operating in the valley; the train ran from Franklin to Mt. Pleasant and made its last run in 1927, with the former railroad bed replaced by a narrow road; and

WHEREAS, at Water Valley's peak, the community counted a doctor's office, dentist's office, a number of blacksmiths, grocers and general merchandise stores, and transportation businesses, but by 1997 there were no longer any businesses in operation; and

WHEREAS, today, at a scenic overlook along the Natchez Trace Parkway is a location known as the Water Valley Overlook, where visitors may stop to relax and take in the sights of the scenic valley below; and

WHEREAS, the historic community of Water Valley has contributed significantly to the rich history of Maury County and the great State of Tennessee; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we commemorate the historic Maury County community of Water Valley, recognize its cultural significance, and celebrate its special place in Tennessee history.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.